

Reflection on Visual Art in the Philosophy of Experience

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This article explores the reflection of art within the frameworks of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Drawing upon Edmund Husserl and Algis Mickūnas, it examines the significance of phenomenological reduction for the experience of art, and further analyses Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concepts of intersubjectivity and embodiment. The aim is to introduce the reader to the hermeneutic conception of art reflection and to compare Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of the fusion of horizons with the state of phenomenological reduction in the experience of artistic creation. The article examines the manner in which the subject reflects upon aesthetic experience, foregrounding the role of subjectivity in the process of artistic perception and elucidating the intentional relation between consciousness and the work of art. It further raises the question of whether art may be apprehended in a spontaneous mode and whether its reflection can be achieved through the suspension of prior knowledge, relying solely on the immediacy of present experience. The hypothesis is advanced that a work of art becomes an event of Being when pre-reflective experience enables the artist's perspective to transform into immediate existential experience.

Keywords: phenomenological reduction, intersubjectivity, fusion of horizons, reflection, experience

INTRODUCTION

Perception determines our place in the world. We seek to articulate it verbally, yet it always precedes what we know. Berger refers to René Magritte's painting *'The Key of Dreams'*, in which the artist depicts an unbridgeable gap between words and vision (Berger 1972). The images presented in the work, which do not coincide with their accompanying textual definitions, suggest a tension between visual perception and language, or, more precisely, between experience and its linguistic articulation.

Artistic images are apprehended in an immediate, unmediated way. Observing the process of painting through the artist's perspective, Cézanne, in his letters, described it as a 'moment of the world's life', which must be rendered precisely as it is, producing an image detached from anything previously experienced. Since their inception, the visual arts have been produced within defined functional spheres. Artistic experience was distinguished from everyday life with the aim of producing an ideological effect. Thus, the long history of art unfolded through the production of meaning within distinct functional fields.

However, times have changed, and the capacity of art to generate meaning has diminished, transferring this responsibility to the beholder of art. The medium of the artistic image is the moment. It is the moment in which we receive works as addressed to us, intended to evoke allegories of our imagination through memories and visions of the future. Reflecting on artistic creation, Merleau-Ponty develops Cézanne's idea that painters who consciously overstate the enigmatic 'crowning' of the work ultimately distort and diminish their own artistic production. In the philosopher's view, the so-called 'crowning' may emerge only by itself if the visible facts are depicted with authenticity, since only thereby can their essence be disclosed. All that can be experienced by the human being is already grounded in the lived body, and any attempt to forcibly impose additional layers of understanding loses its sense (Merleau-Ponty 1945).

The task of art is to reflect the reality of the lived world before it is mediated by rational reflection. Experience must precede knowledge in consciousness, as only then can the message remain authentic. The lived body and the world are intimately bound together as a unified event, whereas the aim of art is to sustain this existential symbiosis. This gives rise to the question of whether phenomenological perception entails the possibility of a spontaneous understanding of art. At this point, it is important not to conflate spontaneity with the notion of primary experience. In order to clarify the essential difference between these positions, it is necessary to turn to Husserl's concept of phenomenological reduction. Human consciousness, in its act of apprehending the world, is unable to suspend its ongoing constitution of it, thereby obstructing access to direct experience. Meanwhile, the method of phenomenological reduction (also referred to as *epoché*) entails the suspension of prior assumptions and hypotheses in favour of the experience of phenomena of consciousness. Through this act of suspension, consciousness is disclosed and thereby opens a space for uninterrupted contact with experience. According to Mickūnas, the entire world surrounding us belongs to the natural attitude. Phenomenological reduction presupposes that all environment given to human beings is given as the natural world; thus, its existence is taken as self-evident and is not subject to doubt. However, the epoché of the natural attitude does not signify its denial, but rather a suspension of it and of any recourse to its constituent elements. All theories, divinities, and interpretations arising from or belonging to this attitude are simply given and are bracketed insofar as they impede access to the phenomena of experience (Mickūnas 2017). It is nevertheless crucial to acknowledge that reduction does not amount to the denial of the world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty elaborates this point, maintaining that absolute reduction is impossible – this constituting the fundamental lesson of reduction (Merleau-Ponty 1945). From his perspective, the goal of phenomenological reduction is not to negate the world, but to alter the human relation to it. The human body is the subject of perception. Through it, the human being exists in the world. This reveals a profoundly ambivalent status of the body: insofar as it is a subject, it also operates as an object of perception-being both visible and seeing. The possibility of vision is determined by the kinship between the body and things. Within the phenomenological approach, this kinship is inescapable, insofar as the body is an extension of the world and appears among its other objects. From this standpoint, the classical subject-object dichotomy, as presupposed by René Descartes, is transcended, insofar as the individual cannot assume a detached observational position with respect to the world; rather, he or she is always already deeply embedded within it. Accordingly, perception can arise only through embodied experience. From the perspective of the philosophy of experience, the importance of the subject's encounter with the world becomes evident. According to

Tomas Kačerauskas, the reflection of art occurs through thingness (materiality). Authentic art is thing-like in nature; therefore, its interpretation takes place through a personal relationship with the material presence of the artwork. According to the author, works of art present things that expand our horizon of understanding and enable the formation of our own existential project; this reflects the aims of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and conveys authentic thingness. Thingness, as usefulness and readiness-to-hand, appears here as a criterion of reality: the real is that which, in being ready-to-hand, finds its place within our project of existence while at the same time expanding it (Kačerauskas 2005). Thus, we approach a conception in which thingness is presupposed as the mediating link through which an external object becomes incorporated into our experience, consequently extending the boundaries of our understanding. Thingness in the reflection of art constitutes one of the principal criteria of authenticity: through a direct relationship with the things of the artwork, art becomes an experience lived by ourselves. Once we start to reflect on a work of art through experience, it moves into the focus of our attention and begins to resist habitual modes of understanding: vision alone no longer suffices to grasp our relation to it. The artwork itself assumes an active role – its meaning is in constant transformation, while its form continues to unfold its own narrative. The meaning that continuously evolves in the course of interpretation allows for the emergence of differing viewpoints (Benjamin 2023). In this way, a community is formed in which the possibility of disagreement and discussion is valued more highly than unanimity. It is precisely this capacity to accept diverse perspectives that becomes a new criterion for the evaluation of art.

The philosophy of experience and the problematic of the work of art occupy a significant place in the Lithuanian context of philosophical science. This topic is actively developed in his research by Dalius Jonkus, whose works analyse the phenomenology of artistic experience, perceptual imagination and visibility (Jonkus 2015). The author examines how the artistic process frees consciousness from the natural attitude and how imagination, perception and memory interact in creativity. In a broader perspective, the phenomenological aspects of creativity are fundamentally examined by Tomas Kačerauskas, who studies cultural phenomena through the prism of human creative existence (Kačerauskas 2005). Algis Mickūnas studies art in the context of world experience, using the theories of Nietzsche and Geiger (Mickūnas 2011). In an international context, these studies of the phenomenology of art draw on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theories of bodily perception and Michel Dufrenne's ontology, which reveal art as a direct way of interacting the meanings of phenomena.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON ART AND ITS MODES OF DEVELOPMENT

The Phenomenological Reduction

Visual art fulfills a fundamental role: it discloses the pre-reflective experience of the world and investigates primary reality. Through the body, the artist converts worldly experience into the artwork. Thus, the dual nature of the body is revealed, insofar as it is both that which sees and that which is seen. Illustrating the interaction between the artist's body and the world, Maurice Merleau-Ponty appeals to the French painter André Marchand, who claimed that, while walking in the forest, he often had the feeling that it was not he who was looking at the forest, but rather that the trees themselves were observing him (Merleau-Ponty 1964). For the author, this insight serves to confirm that the artist exists within the interrelation

of embodied perception and the surrounding world. It is within this very convergence that the experiencing body can be said to emerge. Paintings are not reproductions of objects. No depicted object in reality is ever as it appears in representation. Yet, in the depicted object, the viewer perceives a representation of being. Within the painting, our gaze wanders and becomes disoriented; rather than seeing the painting itself, we see according to it, or with its mediation (Merleau-Ponty 1964). The author treats painting as a tool that renders visible the world's texture, which humans do not perceive despite being part of it. Thus, the French philosopher uses the discourse of visual art to develop his phenomenological conception (Merleau-Ponty). By asserting that the primordial human relation to the world constitutes the essential foundation of rationality, Maurice Merleau-Ponty develops a philosophy of embodied experience. Perception is expressive and creative, and therefore cannot be separated from the domain of art. Within the interplay of body and world, painters attain access to pre-reflective perception, which they articulate in their art through processes of stylisation. This suggests that, from a phenomenological standpoint, the attribution of painting to a specific epoch or artistic movement becomes secondary, while emphasis is placed on the authenticity of painting as a medium that discloses the foundation of being.

So, returning to the question of the spontaneous approach to art, it can be argued that phenomenological reduction enables us to understand how art is given within the experience of consciousness. According to Husserl, reduction makes it possible to bracket prior assumptions and to experience the work of art in immediate perception. However, as emphasised by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, such reduction cannot attain absoluteness due to the inevitably intersubjective nature of human experience in the world. In his analysis of the two philosophers' views on the absoluteness of phenomenological reduction, Jonkus argues that our relation to the world is not primarily epistemic, governed by reflection upon self and other, but fundamentally perceptual. One must relinquish the prejudice that the self is transparently given to itself, that one knows oneself best. One must acknowledge that the self is not given exclusively to itself but is also available to others, and that others may, in certain instances, understand me more adequately than I do myself. Phenomenological reduction, therefore, does not strive to detach the transcendental ego from the world and from others; on the contrary, it aims to disclose transcendental subjectivity as intersubjectivity (Jonkus 2009).

Fusion of Horizons: The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer

According to Immanuel Kant, the purpose of art is not the pleasure derived from mere sensation, but the satisfaction grounded in reflection; thus, aesthetic art is that whose standard resides in the reflecting power of judgment rather than in sensuous feeling (Kant 1991). The author interprets art through logically grounded aesthetic judgments, insofar as, in selecting what is beautiful, the individual justifies this choice by reference to what such objects might become within his or her personal perceptual framework. Kant held that imagination resists subordination to the intellect, since the intellect cannot adequately process the wealth of material that imagination presents. Yet, despite its immeasurable scope, imagination serves as the fundamental source of the intellect's content. He applies it not so much for the objective acquisition of knowledge as for subjective purposes, namely, to enliven the cognitive faculties, and thus indirectly also for the acquisition of knowledge (Kant 1991). Accordingly, the author's view that aesthetic satisfaction in art emerges from reflection rather than from sensory perception implies that reflection presents itself to con-

sciousness as an object, orienting us toward immediate experience, whereas the artwork is understood as an experience that reveals itself to reflecting consciousness. Is it possible to claim that reflection, by its very nature, has an irreducible phenomenological foundation? Such a view is also presupposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, who abandons the conception of art as an object and understands it as an event. In his hermeneutic framework, the interpretation of art dispenses with the evaluation of artistic creation in terms of aesthetic norms. The author advances an approach to art that is fundamentally opposed to the previous one, namely, the concept of play (*Spiel*). Art, like play, possesses its own logic and cannot occur without participants. Nevertheless, meaning is not determined by the artist or by the recipient of the artwork, as the focus is neither on the creator's nor the viewer's subjective states. The play develops its own narrative in its unfolding, dissolving both the artist's and the viewer's ego and drawing them into an experience constituted in the immediacy of the moment. In this way, within a neutral space not subordinate to either side, play unites them into a single whole. This whole, within which the boundary between creator and interpreter disappears, is described by Gadamer as the fusion of horizons. The notion of the horizon is comparable in its objective to the previously discussed idea of phenomenological reduction, though it differs in its methodological approach. If phenomenological reduction presupposes the bracketing of all prior assumptions and hypotheses, Gadamer's idea, instead of bracketing, proposes the fusion of all pre-formed meanings, cultural capital, and experience brought by the individual into a broader, unified field of possibilities. In his view, the experience of understanding stands at a distance from the limits of scientific cognition and becomes possible only within the contexts of philosophy, art, and historical experience. They represent modes of cognition in which truth comes into disclosure, but cannot be verified by the instruments of scientific method (Gadamer 1960). The author argues that, in parallel with philosophical experience, the experience of art is characterised by an autonomous dimension, within which truths are encountered that transcend the domain of methodologically grounded knowledge. Gadamer conceives of art as an essential mode of knowing, with the artwork functioning as a transcendental condition that makes such knowing possible, while at the same time transforming the subject who knows. This view is grounded in a core hermeneutic principle: each encounter with the language of art is an encounter with an incomplete event, and at the same time a participation in its unfolding (Gadamer 1960). In his later works, Gadamer returns to the theme of artistic reflection, concluding that art speaks most immediately and embodies a mysterious trust embracing our whole being, as if every encounter with art were an encounter with ourselves (Gadamer 1960). These reflections help to clarify the idea of art as play: artistic experience impacts the perceiving subject through an event in which participation brings about transformation, while the artwork itself becomes more fully 'itself' with each act of interpretation. In conclusion, Gadamer maintains the position that reflection is most effective when the artwork itself speaks. Thus, the primary role is fulfilled by the work, while interpretation can be considered valid only insofar as it is able to efface itself (Gadamer 1960).

When evaluating the approaches of the two philosophers, it is important to distinguish the idea of free play in the aesthetics of I. Kant and H. G. Gadamer. For Kant, this play is a subjective internal process of consciousness between imagination and intellect. Meanwhile, Gadamer transfers this process to the ontological level: play in his philosophy is interpreted as a dialogue of the work in which the observer participates, thus transcending the individual boundaries of the subject.

Action Painting: The Philosophy of Jackson Pollock

This idea is vividly materialised by Jackson Pollock, who proclaimed the principle of unconscious creation. The painter's approach was met with various criticisms, particularly for what was perceived as attributing unconsciousness to art as a whole; however, Pollock himself merely sought to negate the significance of authorial intention in the interpretation of the artwork. Pollock excludes both empirical reality and visual imagination from the semi-otic structure of art, retaining only spontaneous perception, which is meaningful through the psychophysical charge of its chromatic and graphic stimuli. The 'action painting' discovered by Pollock clearly conveys the concept of phenomenological reduction, redirecting attention away from the external world toward the immediate process of painting itself, as it is experienced in a momentary state of consciousness. 'Action painting', as the artist's distinctive style, was grounded in a unique method of image-making that combined technique, compositional principles, and the artist's presence within the work. The technical component did not overshadow the complex, often contradictory content of 'action painting', characterised by intense energy, rhythm, the pulsation of chromatic masses, rich texture, and diverse interpretations of themes and images. From a phenomenological perspective, Pollock's work reveals a significant shift in the empowerment of interpretation within art: authorial intention loses its semantic authority in relation to the perceptual field of the viewer. The viewer encounters the immediacy of the living present and is thus enabled to constitute its meaning in an unpredictable way. In one of his interviews, Jackson Pollock stated that, while painting, he does not understand what he is doing; only after a certain period of 'acquaintance' does understanding emerge. In the artist's view, the painting lives its own life, while the author merely seeks to allow it to unfold (1948). The marginalisation of authorial intention establishes strong points of contact with a phenomenological understanding of art experience. The empowerment of interpretation transforms the entire structure of the communicative mechanism and enables visual art to communicate in a way accessible to each viewer. Consequently, the meaning of the artwork begins to develop and change through the interpreter's efforts to understand what the artwork expresses. In this way, the assumption begins to take shape that the philosophy of experience becomes the foundation of artistic reflection, while the artwork functions as an emotional stimulus that affects the viewer through pre-reflective experience.

CASE STUDIES

'Mont Sainte-Victoire', Paul Cézanne, 1887

In order to substantiate the hypothesis developed in the theoretical section, namely, the rejection of authorial intention as the primary source of artistic meaning, thereby conceiving art as an emotional stimulus that affects the viewer through pre-reflective experience rather than through cultural codes, it is difficult to dissociate these considerations from the previously mentioned Paul Cézanne, whose work awakened the philosophical intuition of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. If Sartre discovered the sensitivity of his existentialist ideas in the works of Giacometti, then Maurice Merleau-Ponty discerned the phenomenon of pre-reflective being-in-the-world in Paul Cézanne's exploration of depth and light. In studying the painter's world, the philosopher uncovered the very dimensions of meaning within his own phenomenology. The painter's work became a visible field in which Merleau-Ponty encountered previously

unexpressed and philosophically unthematized horizons of sensibility, rich in nuance and driven by an uncontrolled dynamism. From a chronological perspective, one can observe a profound logic in Merleau-Ponty's growing interest in painting, and in Paul Cézanne in particular, which coincided with his intensive exploration of the fundamental concepts of his phenomenology. His essay '*Cézanne's Doubt*' was published in 1945, the same year as his major work '*Phenomenology of Perception*'. '*Eye and Mind*' was the last work published during his lifetime by Merleau-Ponty, written in 1960 as the ideas of '*The Visible and the Invisible*' were taking shape. This final and unfinished work rethinks ontology, asserting that the visible world (the body, objects) and the invisible (thought, meaning, depth) are inseparably intertwined, constituting a single structure of being – the 'flesh of the world' – as its 'reverse and obverse sides'. We can observe that in his final works, Merleau-Ponty approaches the conclusion that philosophy is uniquely close to the art of vision: 'true philosophy is to learn to see the world anew. Philosophy is not a reflection of pre-established truth; like art, it is the realization of truth' (1960). In order to elucidate the point of contact between phenomenology and visual art, a concrete case must be considered. One such case is Paul Cézanne's '*Mont Sainte-Victoire*', repeatedly addressed in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

In this series of landscapes painted between 1904 and 1906, we encounter a threefold depth of time: the foreground discloses the immediacy of the present, the background suggests the enduring strata of the Earth's surface, and the composition is ultimately unified by the mountain, an element that exceeds temporal categories and manifests as a form of timeless presence. Another key aspect revealing a direct link to phenomenology is the unity of



sensation and vision, whereby the eyes and the body are engaged within the world of the artwork and its objects. According to the philosopher, the eye functions not as a neutral surface of projection, but as a capacity for being in contact with things (Merleau-Ponty 1945). In the landscape of *'Mont Sainte-Victoire'*, the distinctions between touch and sight, the tactile and the visual, are not significant for primary perception; rather, we observe how a striking universality of experience is revealed: we perceive depth, the smoothness or roughness of textures, and the weight of forms. This multiplicity disclosed to the viewer can be understood as a visual expression of the thickness of primordial experience, a concept articulated by philosopher in his analysis of embodied perception (1945). Cézanne creates a kind of world-performance, bringing together diverse dynamics. Within the mountain motif, the temporality of existence manifests as vital and attentive: dynamic, curving brushstrokes disclose the immediacy of the present, while the valley recedes into a slow, enigmatic convergence with eternity. These two poles of differing rhythms are governed by the dominant presence of the mountain, which embodies the essence of the reflective perception of time. Through a prolonged contemplation of the painting, the viewer may experience a sense of disorientation among spatial layers, a wandering that ultimately leads to the culmination of the work, wherein time itself comes into visibility. Cézanne's creativity unfolds as a dissolution into the visible, transcending the limits of his own embodiment in order to merge with the horizons of the world. In this way, the artist's subjectivity becomes part of the fragility inherent in human corporeal existence. *'Mont Sainte-Victoire'*, like other works by Cézanne, offers a powerful example of how painting emerges as a fusion of the visible and the imagined. Grounded in pre-reflective, unmediated experience, it derives its essence from lived being and thus discloses the embodied structure of the world. 'The artist converts the world into painting, giving over his body in exchange' (1960). In this landscape, the painter unfolds the visible world in such a way that it surrounds the observer. The viewer's gaze is drawn into the painting and, in passing through it, becomes embodied within it. Cézanne's *'Mont Sainte-Victoire'* thus leads one into the very heart of things. The single-point geometric perspective yields to a visual field where objects permeate one another. Temporality is accessible only through embodied experience, while the unity of past, present and future resists explanation through the frameworks of culturally sedimented codes. Cézanne's landscape reveals multiple temporal layers: in the warmth of sunlight, the branches along the shore flutter with ease, while beyond them, on another spatial plane, the imposing mountain lingers, hinting at the inevitability of the unknown. On the distant horizon, threatening clouds traverse the sky, intersected by oblique strata of rain. Such is the world we inhabit – immediate and closely attuned to our senses. The interplay of time and space resonates with Edmund Husserl's reflections on temporality, suggesting that time and space are reversible and mutually constitutive dimensions of meaning. According to Husserl, perception provides a 'field of presence' in which the objects are given along with their horizons. From a spatial standpoint, perceiving one side of an object already implies the anticipation of its unseen sides, while temporally, the present moment holds within itself both the immediate past and the expectation of the future.

In summarising the phenomenology of Paul Cézanne's work, it is appropriate to turn to the Lithuanian philosophical context and mention Arvydas Šliogeris's insight into the relationship between the work and being. From Šliogeris's point of view, Cézanne's painting is able to grasp the pure materiality and sensory intensity of being (Šliogeris 2017). The works lead to a transcendental moment of the being of a thing, which is experienced in a pre-reflective state.

'What I See', Šarūnas Sauka, 2026

By providing a compelling foundation for a phenomenological analysis of visual art, Merleau-Ponty inspires further exploration of this theme, prompting a turn toward the Lithuanian art context, in which certain artists ground the emergence of meaning in lived experience as its primary condition. In this context, it is particularly important to mention Šarūnas Sauka, whose artistic world resembles a 'metaphysical' labyrinth, in which the human being, having lost a conventional understanding of reality, finds himself in the mysterious and unsettling depths of an unawakened consciousness (Uždavinys 1989). In his artistic practice, Šarūnas Sauka investigates the anxiety of human being, drawing the observer into an inevitable encounter with a feeling that may be named in many ways: sin, pain, shame, despair's all manifestations of destruction. Nevertheless, the affect produced cannot be defined in a single, definitive manner. Whether it leads to destruction or resistance depends on interpretation. In the work of Šarūnas Sauka, interpretation and artwork exist in a reciprocal relation: they shape and respond to one another, and neither can claim a closer access to truth (Valatkevičius 1998).

In order to examine the full chain of interpretive transmission, it is important to consider the recent work '*What I See*' by Šarūnas Sauka, in which the mechanism of meaning-making becomes a complex interpretive sequence: the artist paints his interpretation of global events,



passing this transformation of meaning on to the viewer for further analysis. The painting immediately evokes a sense of familiarity, as recognisable figures from the political arena appear within an abstract context.

In the composition, a half-naked President of the United States, represented as a global ruler, gestures toward Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher who was among the first to theorise the concept of the ideal state and its governance. Further in the composition, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is depicted eating scrambled eggs. Meanwhile, the iconic Brussels sculpture *Manneken Pis* is reimagined with the face of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Gitanas Nausėda is depicted running while carrying a radiant rural homestead, reminiscent of that held by the kings in the paintings of M. K. Čiurlionis (Kairytė 2026). A deeper engagement with the painting discloses anxiety as a constitutive phenomenon of human existence. Anxiety emerges in situations where the fundamental values shaping one's identity and sense of self are placed at risk. In Šarūnas Sauka's work, this anxiety can be understood phenomenologically, as the viewer senses a threat both to oneself and to the everyday structures that sustain the experience of 'reality'. Through interpretation, the viewer is able to reconsider personal values and, through this process, arrive at a renewed understanding of the self. The message conveyed by Šarūnas Sauka carries an ontological significance: the threat to values symbolises the finitude of human existence. On the one hand, anxiety may inspire a more persistent cultivation or reassessment of one's values. However, upon a deeper examination of the essence of anxiety, and in light of multiple works by Šarūnas Sauka, one is inevitably reminded of Martin Heidegger's concept of the Nothing. The Nothing, as the opposing counterpart to Being, is an indispensable condition for Being's existence. The artist visualises the question posed by Martin Heidegger: 'Is there a fundamental attunement within human existence through which one is confronted with the Nothing?' According to Heidegger, 'This indeed can occur, and does occur, albeit rarely – in moments of fundamental anxiety. Anxiety discloses the Nothing' (Heidegger 1992). Šarūnas Sauka resonates with this claim, presenting a visual counterpart in which anxiety reveals the Nothing as the condition for the disclosure of Being.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ENCOUNTER WITH EXISTENCE IN VISUAL ART

A comparative analysis of Paul Cézanne and Šarūnas Sauka reveals a visual articulation of the tension between Being and the Nothing. In Paul Cézanne's work, objects are disclosed within the openness of Being and manifest themselves in its light. The painter portrays Being as the field within which all entities find their ground and their beginning. Šarūnas Sauka, in turn, approaches worldly phenomena from the perspective of the Nothing. His work discloses the Nothing as the principle underlying the temporality of all things and the inevitability of non-being, thereby revealing the void at the core of Being itself.

These two perspectives, each enabling phenomenological reflection, demonstrate that artists articulate the dimensions of Being and the Nothing, which take on their ultimate form only within the viewer's consciousness. The final interpretation of these phenomena, much like in the reading of philosophical texts, begins only within the viewer's imagination. It is there that Being and the Nothing become clarified and acquire a unique, individual meaning for each person. The paintings may thus be understood as a visual confirmation of Heidegger's thesis that art is a site where Being is disclosed and truth comes into unconcealment. Art constitutes the happening of truth, insofar as the being of the work unfolds as a mode of preservation (Heidegger 2003). The viewer becomes the bearer of truth, determining the conditions of its disclosure. It can be posited that the pre-reflective experience of the viewer in

the act of interpretation functions as a key to the openness of being as event. In this sense, painters enact an encounter with Being, wherein the observer constitutes and clarifies meaning out of what was previously given only as an oriented horizon. The scope of the phenomenological approach to art is remarkably extensive. It culminates in a fundamental thesis about the origin of self-reflection: that Being, insofar as it is understood, is language. Here, we are unexpectedly brought back to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's insight – 'everything is a symbol'. This implies that every object refers beyond itself to something else, thereby articulating a key phenomenological and hermeneutic insight: the notion of 'everything' delineates how things appear to human understanding. There is nothing that does not direct thought toward something beyond itself. No phenomenon is reducible to the singular meaning it discloses to an individual subject. The seemingly universal notion of the symbol reveals an intrinsic ambiguity: on the one hand, all things are interwoven within a network of relations that exceeds human comprehension; on the other, any given entity may function as a representative of this totality, directing understanding toward an expanded horizon of meaning. Given that the relational structure of the whole remains concealed, it calls for interpretive disclosure. For this reason, although Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's insight appears universal, it is most clearly realised in the experience of art, where the artwork condenses within itself the symbols that define the totality of our being. In contrast to other disciplines, art embodies the event of an absolute present. The intimacy of the moment through which we encounter the work unsettles the familiarity of our everyday world, disclosing an eternal truth – already inscribed in the 4th century BCE by the enigmatic Delphic Oracle at the entrance to the Temple of Apollo: 'Know thyself'.

CONCLUSIONS

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy implies that art embodies a primordial, pre-reflective experience, accessible through our embodied existence in the world. In this process, the artist, through his body, enables Being itself to come into appearance. The significance of an artwork lies in its ability to disclose the foundation of Being through direct, sensuous experience, formed prior to rational articulation. It may be argued that phenomenology restores to art its ontological weight through the expression of Being, in which the body becomes the medium connecting the artist and what takes a tangible form on the canvas.

The perspectives of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Immanuel Kant define the artwork as an event that transforms the perceiving subject. Art thus becomes an autonomous source of meaning. The more interpretations that emerge around a work, the stronger its identity becomes, as its identity develops through the diversity of perception and the evolution of its interpretations. It may be concluded that the identity of an artwork depends directly on the interpretations that surround it. Artistic reflection can thus be understood as a necessary condition for the work to be realised in time.

Paul Cézanne's painting discloses the structure of the 'flesh of the world', foregrounding vision as a mode of embodied being-in-the-world. Through the interplay of temporal and spatial phenomena, Being is reflected, and the viewer, through the lived body, becomes a participant in the ontological field of the artwork. Reflection may be understood as a sensory response: in apprehending the weight of the mountain or the depth of the valley, one recognises oneself as part of the 'flesh of the world'. In contrast, Šarūnas Sauka reflects the environment through the phenomena of anxiety and fear. Through vulnerability, fragility and estrangement, the viewer is drawn into a metaphysical enigma of meaning. Feelings associated with

pain compel the body to respond before consciousness begins to analyse the event, while the awareness of absurd despair functions as an emotional stimulus that dissolves the boundary between the worlds of the artwork and the viewer. In the process of interpretation, it becomes evident that both the symbols of tranquility in Cézanne and the symbols of anxiety in Sauka operate as primary phenomena, eliminating the distinction between the object and the subject. Through sensory experience, the viewer returns to a pre-reflective state, lived through the body.

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IEVA DUBNOVA

Vaizduojamojo meno refleksija patirties filosofijoje

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama meno refleksija fenomenologijos ir hermeneutikos kontekste. Remiantis Edmundo Husserlio ir Algio Mickūno idėjomis, aptariama fenomenologinės redukcijos reikšmė meno patyrimui, taip pat nagrinėjamos Maurice'o Merleau-Ponty idėjos apie intersubjektyvumą ir kūniškumą. Siekiama supažindinti skaitytoją su hermeneutine meno refleksijos samprata ir palyginti Hanso-Georgo Gadamerio horizontų susiliejimo ir fenomenologinės redukcijos būsenas patiriant kūrybą. Straipsnyje aptariama, kaip asmuo reflektuoja estetinę patirtį, išryškinant subjekto svarbą meno suvokimo procese ir atskleidžiant sąmonės ir kūrinio prasminių ryši. Keliamas klausimas, ar menas gali būti suvokiamas spontaniškai ir ar įmanoma jo refleksija atsiribojus nuo išankstinio žinojimo ir pasitelkiant vien dabarties patyrimo akimirką. Keliami hipotezė, kad meno kūrinys tampa būties įvykiu tada, kai ikirefleksinis patyrimas įgalina dailininko perspektyvą virsti tiesiogine egzistencine patirtimi.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: fenomenologinė redukcija, intersubjektyvumas, horizontų susiliejimas, refleksija, patyrimas